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SUBJECT: RUSSIA PREEMPTS SAAKASHVILI UNGA SPEECH: UNOMIG  
RESOLUTION

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Daniel Russell: 1.4 (b, d).

¶1. (C) Summary: Convoking the Friends of Georgia on September 21, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Karasin expressed concern over the deteriorating status of Georgian-Abkhazian relations, passed draft language on an UNOMIG resolution that condemns -- sharply and at length -- GOG operations in the Kodori gorge (see para. 9 for full text), detailed undemocratic actions by the GOG, reiterated that Russia would maintain its peacekeeping commitments and added that without CIS peacekeeping forces there is no justification for UNOMIG. Separately, Karasin told the Ambassador that the resolution text was open to negotiation and Russia simply wanted to circulate a draft before FM Lavrov's upcoming meetings in New York. End Summary

¶2. (C) On September 21, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Grigory Karasin convoked the representatives of the Friends of Georgia, noting that the importance of the topic made it imperative to meet; in particular, the deterioration in the status of Georgian-Abkhaz relations. According to UNOMIG data, Karasin stated, the GOG had refused to fully withdraw its troops and treaty-limited equipment from the Kodori gorge, as stipulated by the Moscow Agreement, and the GOG had impeded the free movement of the CIS peacekeeping and UNOMIG observers. Karasin added that 2000 Georgian military forces were present in the upper gorge area and UNOMIG had recorded 16 violations by the GOG of the Moscow Agreement. The GOR was concerned by the on-going efforts of the GOG military, engineering, and police forces to build infrastructure for a government-in-exile.

¶3. (C) With a nod to President Saakashvili's upcoming address at UNGA, Karasin commented that the GOR had "serious grounds" to believe that he would demand the withdrawal of CIS peacekeeping forces from Abkhazia and assign blame to Russia for the ineffectiveness of these forces. Karasin said that he did not intend to repeat the contents of the MFA's September 14 statement on developments in Georgia (reftel), but would only underscore that the GOR, as before, remained committed to its multilateral and bilateral commitments. "We will carry them out in full."

¶4. (C) In response to events on the ground, Karasin explained, the GOR would introduce new language for the UNOMIG resolution, and was offering a draft in advance to allow its partners to carefully study the GOR proposals and make comments and counter-proposals. A number of the elements, he noted upfront, contained language that directly blamed the GOG for events in the Kodori gorge. Karasin reaffirmed that the CIS peacekeepers were inextricably linked to UNOMIG's mission and the protection of UN personnel. The international community had an obligation to react, he argued, when agreements were violated. GOG actions created a

threat to regional security that were "absolutely inadmissible." In order to normalize the situation, Karasin said, it was helpful to have a "frank and direct" assessment. The violations recorded by UNOMIG and the CIS peacekeepers complicated GOG efforts to blame the GOR.

15. (C) Karasin urged the FOG members to carefully study the proposals for discussion in New York and by the special representatives in Berlin on September 28. Karasin summed up that he was "absolutely convinced" that all the Friends understood the importance of a unified approach to resolving this conflict, and hoped for a substantive response in Berlin. Karasin closed by noting the GOR's satisfaction with FOG gatherings in Moscow, as a venue for conveying information.

16. (C) Karasin also delivered a separate critique of Georgia's democratic credentials, noting with concern the trend in Georgia to diminish freedoms and basic rights. He expressed concern over the security forces' attacks on the opposition and the shrinking number of independent media outlets, including the closure of three television stations and ten newspapers. Recently, he added, the management of another television station had been replaced. There had been mass arrests of influential opposition figures, charged with coup plotting, but no evidence provided of their complicity.

17. (C) Separately, Karasin made clear to the Ambassador that the draft resolution text was being distributed now to open the door for meaningful discussion in New York during Lavrov's visit. Karasin emphasized that the text was open for negotiation. He reiterated his concern about Saakashvili's UNGA speech and that the situation was spiraling out of control, noting that NATO's extension of Intensified Dialogue to Georgia was not a welcome development

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and Saakashvili would draw the wrong message from it.

18. (C) Comment: In Security Council Secretary Ivanov's comments to the Ambassador (ref B) and in subsequent meetings with MFA officials, the GOR has made clear that it finds Georgian efforts to internationalize the disputes, through expanding the negotiating formats, putting frozen conflicts on the UNGA agenda with its GUAM partners, and courting NATO membership, unacceptable. The "frank and open" language of the Russian draft resolution appears to be a tit-for-tat response to the GOG's "Basic Principles" that offended the GOR. The tenor of the debate may further intensify depending on the tone and direction of the Georgian President's UNGA address.

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Text of Russian Draft Resolution  
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19. (U) Text of "Elements to the Security Council Resolution on the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict settlement":

"The Security Council,...

-- Expresses its deep concern with regard to the actions of the Georgian side in the Kodori valley in July 2006 in violation of provisions of the relevant Security Council resolutions containing, in particular, an appeal to the sides to refrain from any action that might impede the peace process, as well as of the Moscow agreement on cease fire and separation of forces of 14 May 1994, and other Georgian-Abkhaz agreements concerning the Kodori valley;

-- Urges the Georgian side to withdraw its troops and other armed formations from the Kodori valley and not to undertake any new additional steps aimed at destabilization of situation in the Kodori valley;

-- Also urged the Georgian side to return to the status quo

available before the entry of its units in the Kodori valley and, in particular, to abandon the plans of installing the "the government of autonomous republic of Abkhazia as well as other actions capable of complicating the peace process of Georgian-Abkhaz settlement;

-- Demands from the Georgian side to fully adhere to its international legal obligations, in particular regarding the urgent resumption of regular monitoring of the situation in the upper Kodori valley by joint UNOMIG and CIS peacekeeping force patrols and the provision in this regard of effective security guarantees;

-- Reaffirms the important role of the CIS peacekeeping force in the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict zone, deplores the actions of the Georgian side aimed at the termination of its activities, and stresses that such a development would lead to a further aggravation of the situation in the zone of conflict with unpredictable consequences;

-- Recalls the direct inter-connection of the UNOMIG and the CIS peacekeeping force mandates;

-- Urges the Georgian side once again to address seriously legitimate Abkhaz security concerns, to avoid steps which could be seen as threatening and to refrain from militant rhetoric;

-- Calls on both parties to finalize without delay the document on the non-resumption of hostilities and the international guarantees of security, and to sign it;

-- Underlines that is the primary responsibility of both sides to provide appropriate security and to ensure the freedom of movement of UNOMIG, the CIS peacekeeping force and other international personnel and calls on both sides to fulfill their obligations in this regard;

-- Calls on both parties to continue participation in quadripartite meetings on safety issues in Chuburhindzhi on a regular basis in order to be able to reaction promptly to the mutual security concerns or threats in the security sphere and to this end to develop, agree and endorse the rules of procedure o such quadripartite meetings;

-- Requests the Secretary General to include the detailed information on the Kodori valley in the next report on the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia."

End Text

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